

Clint Gilman, Forester, Tomah Ranger Fort McCoy; **Jessup Weichelt**, Threatened and Endangered Species Biologist, Natural Resources Branch NRB, Fort McCoy; **Rikki Ratsch**, Colorado State University, serving Fort McCoy Wildlife Dept; **Kevin Luepke**, Fort McCoy Wildlife Program Manager; **Chris Hamerla**, Regional Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator with Gold Sands RC&D; **Erika Segerson-Mueller**, DNR Invasive Plant Program Specialist, Oshkosh Service Center; **Jeff Polzin**, Friends of the Black River Representative; **Mara Lince**, Jackson County Wildlife LTE; **Joey Esterline**, Adrian Township and Monroe Co. District 15. Supervisor; **Connie Weedman**, Sparta; **Ben Johnston**, Wilton township ; **Mic Armstrong**, Soil Conservation Technician and MCISWG Scribe, Natural Resource Conservation Service; **Lily Lefebvre**, Soil & Water Conservationist and Scribe, Monroe County Land Conservation Department

Pre-Meeting Field Trip

Gilman gave a short welcome and introduced **Ratsch** to speak about treating invasives in high water table areas. **Ratsch** discussed the importance of determining if you have a wetland through the area's soils, native plants, and habitat. He showed maps of the WI DNR surface water data viewer website and the USFWS wetland mapper website. He explained that some herbicides have an environmental hazard warning in aquatic settings. He mentioned some of the common herbicides—Polaris, Garbon 3A, and Aquanet – and how they act in aquatic areas. He emphasized the importance of googling your herbicide labels and following instructions of application in wet settings. He also warned about checking the percent of active ingredient when purchasing, and the difference between an active ingredient and a name brand. **Hamerla** said to be aware of what you are putting on and make sure it's water safe. If unsure landowners should contact a DNR wetland specialist.

Ratsch showed a few options of herbicide sponges for easy application. He then gave demonstration on cutting honeysuckle and applying herbicide with a backpack sprayer. He stressed the importance of cutting all stems of the invasive plant and adding herbicide to the stumps. He explained you must cut the stem at a slight angle but not too steep so the herbicide has time to soak in. Be mindful of extra herbicide that is being put on, try to minimize the spray of the backpack.

Derek Maki gave a talk on milfoil/curly leaf pondweed removal efforts in Fort McCoy. They found that scuba diving to hand pull stems of the plants is the most effective way to reach most of the species. He explained that lately they have been needing less effort due to removal success in the past. He discussed the invasives in Sandy Lake (field trip location). In 2017 the high amount of precipitation flushed tannins into the lake and stopped sunlight penetration which slowed the growth of all plants. The natives have started to rebound with no invasives found yet.

Weichelt gave a brief update on eDNA efforts by Fort McCoy. Water samples were gathered and tested in a lab in Iowa. They detected many different species, including terrestrial animals, in the water samples. The report gave an overview of all the species but **Weichelt** explained that the numbers are not reliable due to the samples being taken at one spot in the lake at one point in the day. Fort McCoy is going to keep doing research on how to utilize this information especially when it comes to detecting invasive species.

Core Meeting

Agendas passed around, went around the room for introductions.

Agenda Additions: Invader Persuader discussed later in the meeting.

Outreach Media: The article Jennifer Rodriguez Moran wrote in the Monroe County Herald was discussed. **Weedman** will reach out to her to try to get meeting notices/post meeting articles published in the upcoming papers.

Last Meeting Recap: Group has been happy with meeting turnouts the past few times. **Esterline** appreciates everyone coming out to see her property, and offered an annual visit! **Luepke** mentioned that more equipment demonstrations with Jackson County citizens would be a good idea. Everyone had positive feedback on using Goats-on-the-Go. **Ratsch** gave a quick update that Fort McCoy is using goats to manage buckthorn/honeysuckle.

Jackson Co. AIS Funding Opportunity: **Hamerla** explained that annually every county is awarded AIS grant money. To determine amount of money, there is a metric based on size, population, public access to waterbodies, etc. that is calculated for each county each year. The county conservationist fills out an application, and funding is available after January 1st. The county can receive that funds directly (usually if they have designated staff to use it) or they can designate an agent like Golden Sands. Financial/liability gets easier with using an agent. It is a noncompetitive grant with no match requirement and a commitment of only 1 year. The template for county applications are the same but once approved Golden Sands will develop a focus that fits with county needs. Jackson County is on board and accepted funding and will be using Golden Sands as an agent.

Golden Sands is hiring for a new position, looking for a more experienced applicant with a southern WI focus. **Hamerla** will send job posting to the group. **Polzin** added in that the one year commitment to the grant is an incentive that convinced Jackson County to agree. He will have to convince the county again this year. **Hamerla** emphasized that outreach and education in public areas is the main focus of the grant.

Vice Chair Discussion: **Luepke** stated he will bring Fort McCoy's new resource conservationist to December meeting and give them the job of Vice Chair of MCISWG.

Jackson County CISMA: **Segerson-Mueller** explained that many counties in Wisconsin have a CISMA partnership. The benefits include more resources, more mapping, and more funding opportunities like WMA-PFGP (weed management area – private forest grant program) which lists new groups as priorities. **Hamerla** agreed with these benefits along

with adding in that there will be more project areas. **Gilman** mentioned concern about the merge because of travel between Jackson County and Monroe County. He wasn't sure many people would want to travel between the two and in turn we would lose Monroe County citizens.

Polzin emphasized that Jackson County has a limited pool of volunteers and would be happy if a quarter of the meetings were held in southern Jackson County. He likes the education this group does but they don't have much more time to give to the group. He would try to make it to meetings every couple of months. Jackson County employees (Ben Anderson) or Jackson County DNR office staff could be additions. **Esterline** brought up that either way Jackson County should be invited to the Fort McCoy field day for educational purposes. **Segerson-Mueller** explained that usually for multiple county CISMAs there's a steering committee and with each county is represented. The group will likely vote on the topic of adding Jackson County into their CISMA at the December meeting. **Segerson-Mueller** will inform **Gilman** of what would need to be completed if deciding to move forward, possibly an MOU adding Jackson County.

Polzin asked if Monroe County had any issues with county highway department spraying herbicides on roadsides and concerning foragers. **Luepke** explained it is probably a plant growth inhibitor to limit the amount of times the roadside needs to be mowed. **Esterline** stated that she had taken a call from a concerned landowner over the same issue in the past. **Polzin** asked if the growth inhibitor could be a topic at a future meeting. **Luepke** recommended Rick Schulte as a contact, provided a phone number.

Mapping Monroe County Highways: **Johnston** and team finished walking the highways of Monroe County at the end of September. They mapped 170+ miles, both sides of the road, focusing on the most problematic invasive species. Only prohibited plants on the NR 40 list, no restricted plants were found. **Gilman** wants **Johnston** to bring maps with to December meeting to interpret results. Some discussion on mowing schedule of county roads during seed out of invasive plants.

Monroe County Cost Share Applications: **Gilman** informed the group that Bob Cox was the final applicant that received the grant. There was one runner-up that could be funded next year. The three applicants that received the grant this year were Cox, Hundt, and Spring Bank.

Prairie Garden: **Esterline** trying to get prairie garden established near farmer's market by Beaver Creek as part of beautification. Pushed back to spring probably.

Purple Loosetrife: **Esterline** raised beetles and had a good crop. Most were released by Whiskey Creek south of I-90 with location recommended by **Ellefson** (county's summer intern) and **Armstrong**. Some were brought to area where the tent was set up in the past. The release sites will be put into DNR SWIMS database.

Phragmites: No update. **Hamerla** is hoping new hire of Golden Sands will take over this project. Two locations by Tomah that are a concern because they are on the prohibited list in NR-40.

Play Clean Go Signs/Scrushers: **Micheel** will work on this.

Fort McCoy Updates: **Ratsch** explained that he wants to set up test plots with the goats along with other removal methods to see what is most effective. Garlic Mustard fall treatments have begun along with Knotweed treatments. Woody invasive shred sites were established with foliar treatment of buckthorn and honeysuckle.

Front Line Updates: **Gilman** informed the group that the Lacrosse River Area treatment finished up with 85% buckthorn kill with foliar methods.

Future December Meeting: Meeting will be held at Spring Bank Pavilion on December 7th, 2023.

Invader Persuader: Group in agreement that this is a good idea. Someone in the group that is instrumental in stopping the spread of invasives will win this award. It will be voted on at the December meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at exactly 3pm.